

Teens and Digital Media

How are teens and young adults using media?

Overall

There was an increase in the total amount of **media use** (i.e., person hours) among teens between 2004 and 2009; use increased from 6.5 hours/day in 2004 to 7.5 hours/day in 2009. During the same period, **media exposure** time increased by over two hours (from 7.5 hours to 10 hours and 45 minutes) due to the practice of using more than one medium at a time.¹

By 2004, teens mastered the art of “media multitasking,” and by 2009 they drastically expanded this art -- increased use of “new” media without cutting back use of “old” media. Daily use of TV and audio media by 8-18 year-olds increased between 2004 and 2009 along with increases in video game and computer use. There has been a huge increase in mobile media ownership among teens, with 85% of teens age 15-18 owning a cell phone in 2009. As teens age, media use seems to peak at age 11-14 and decline slightly among teens age 15-18.¹

“Screen time” dominates both teens’ and 20-somethings’ media consumption. Young adults report 20 hours online per week, while teens spend about 17 hours online. Both groups report 16 hours a week watching TV. Once you add in playing video games and viewing downloaded video, teens and 20-somethings spend around three times as many hours per week on screen media than on traditional media such as magazines, books, or radio.²

Online

93% of American teens between 12 and 17-years-old use the Internet, and over half of teens (63%) go online daily. 93% of 18- to 29-year-olds also use the internet.³

The older Americans get, the more likely they are to seek out health information online. About one-third (31%) of teens who are online report going online for this information, while 72% of 18 to 29-year-olds report this activity.³ In addition, 17% of teens report going online for sensitive health information, including information about sexual health. Girls are more likely to report going online for sensitive health information compared to boys (23% versus 11%).³

In 2009, 73% of online teens used social networking sites, an increase from 65% of teens in 2008. Young adults (age 18-29) report similar levels of using social networking sites (72%).³ Teens report that they use social networking sites to post comments about pictures, comment on friends’ pages or walls and, to a lesser degree, send messages (private or group). Overall, teens are not using Twitter in large numbers; only 8% report using it.³ High school age girls are the most likely to use Twitter (13%). However, one-third of young adults age 18-29 report using Twitter.³

Many teens say they engage in at least one type of content creation: 38% share content such as artwork, video, stories, photos, 21% remix content into new creation; and 14% work on personal or others’ blog or webpage.³

Research with both high school⁴ and college students⁵ shows that there are racial/ethnic and socioeconomic differences in the popularity of social networking sites. Hispanic students, for example, are more likely than others to use MySpace and less likely to use Facebook. Facebook users are more likely to come from families with higher levels of education than those on MySpace.

Nine in ten Internet users ages 18-29 use video-sharing sites, up from 72% in 2008. On a typical day in 2009, 36% of young adult internet users watched video on these sites.⁶ 75% of teens and 65% of 20-somethings reported visiting YouTube in the past 30 days.²

Video Games

97% of teens and 81% of adults ages 18-29 report playing video games.⁷ Nearly 1 in 10 teens (8%) use virtual worlds.

Nearly all teens, regardless of race, gender, age, or socioeconomic status, play some sort of games, with 31% playing daily and another 21% playing three to five days a week.⁷ Video game playing peaks among young teens age 11 to 14.¹

Cell Phone

Only 45% of teens 12-17 had cell phones in 2004, but that number has risen steadily; in 2009, 75% of teens had cell phones.⁸ 88% of teens with a cell phone (and 72% of teens overall) can be considered text-messengers, and 54% text daily (up from 38% in 2008).⁸ Girls tend to text more than boys, and the number of texts sent/received tends to increase with age.⁸

Teens from low-income house-holds, and African American teens in particular, are more likely than other teens to go online using their cell phone (44% use it to go online compared to 35% of Hispanic teens and 21% of white teens).⁸

83% of all adults have a cell phone, and 93% of young adults age 18-29 have a cell phone.⁸ 77% have ever used a cell/PDA to do something other than talk (e.g., text message, take/send pictures, play music, instant message, map directions, etc.), and 42% do at least one on a typical day.⁹

Hispanics and those 18 to 30-years old most likely to use and be attached to their cell phones (saying they'd find it harder to be without a cell phone than without Internet or email).⁹

"Sexting"

20% of teens (age 13 to 19) have sent/posted nude or semi-nude pictures of themselves, including 22% of teen girls, 18% of teen boys, and 11% of young teen girls (ages 13-16).¹⁰ Comparatively, 33% of young adults (ages 20 to 26) have sent/posted nude or semi-nude pictures of themselves, including 36% of young women and 31% of young men.¹⁰

68% of teens and young adults describe the activity of sending suggestive content to someone else as "flirty," but 73% also say sending sexually suggestive content can have serious negative consequences.¹⁰ 72% of teens and 68% of young adults also believe that personal sexy messages and pictures/video usually end up being seen by more than just those to whom they were sent.¹⁰

References

- 1 Rideout, V., Foehr, U.G., & Roberts, F.R. (2010). *Generation M²: Media in the Lives of 8-18 Year-olds*. The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Retrieved March 2010 from <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/mh012010pkg.cfm>.
- 2 The TRU Study 2009: U.S. Teen and Twenty-Something Edition. Obtained via subscription.: <http://www.trustudy.com>.
- 3 Lenhart, A., Purcell, K., Smith, A., & Zickuhr, K. (2010, February 3). *Social Media & Mobile Internet Use Among Teens and Young Adults*. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved April 28, 2010, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2010/Social-Media-and-Young-Adults.aspx>
- 4 <http://www.danah.org/papers/talks/PDF2009.html>
- 5 <http://www.esztersblog.com/2009/07/08/popularity-of-facebook-and-myspace-changes-but-sex-differences-in-use-persist/>
- 6 Madden, M. (2009, July 29). *The Audience for Online Video-Sharing Sites Shoots Up*. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved August 3, 2009, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2009/13--The-Audience-for-Online-Video-Sharing-Sites-Shoots-Up.aspx>.
- 7 Lenhart, A., Jones, S., & Rankin McGill, A. (2008, December 7). *Adults and video games data memo*, PEW Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved May 20, 2009 from http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2008/PIP_Adult_gaming_memo.pdf.
- 8 Lenhart, A., Ling, R., Campbell, S., & Purcell, K. (2010, April 20). *Teen and Mobile Phones*. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved April 27, 2010, from <http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2010/PIP-Teens-and-Mobile-2010.pdf>.
- 9 Horrigan, J. (2007). *Mobile Access to Data and Information*. Pew Internet & American Life Project. Retrieved April 22, 2008, from http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/244/report_display.asp.
- 10 *Sex and Tech: Results from a Survey of Teens and Young Adults* (2008). Report by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy: http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/sextech/PDF/SexTech_Summary.pdf

Digital Projects in Public Health and Additional Resources

Online Testing and Assessment

I Want the Kit (<http://www.iwantthekit.org/>)

San Francisco City Clinic (<http://dphwww.sfdph.org/sfcityclinic/syphilistesting/>)

Online Birth Control

Bedsider (www.bedsider.org)

Method Chooser (<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/all-access/>)

Instant Birth Control (<http://www.instantbirthcontrol.com/>)

Emergency Contraception in SF (<http://www.sfcityclinic.org/services/planb.asp>)

The Emergency Contraception Website (<http://ec.princeton.edu/>)

Daily Pill Reminder (<https://www.seasonique.com/already-taking-seasonique/daily-pill-reminder/>)

Online Tracking

Mon.thly Info (<http://mon.thly.info/>)

Lady Timer (<http://ladytimer.com/>)

Online Partner Notification

inSPOT (<http://inspot.org/gateway.aspx>)

MANHUNT CARES (<http://www.manhuntcares.com/directory>)

Blogs

Kristen Alderson's Blog (<http://blogs.abc.com/kristen/>)

Pregnant Pause (http://blog.thenationalcampaign.org/pregnant_pause/)

AIDS.gov Blog New Media Kit (<http://blog.aids.gov/new-media-toolkit.html>)

Microblogging

Twitter (<http://twitter.com/>)

The National Campaign (<http://twitter.com/thenc>)

StayTeen (<http://twitter.com/stayteen>)

SexReally (<http://twitter.com/sexreally>)

TweetDeck (<http://tweetdeck.com/beta/>)

HootSuite (<http://hootsuite.com/>)

Twtpoll (<http://twtpoll.com/>)

Social Networking Sites

Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/>)

MySpace (<http://www.myspace.com/>)

ThinkMTV (<http://think.mtv.com/>)

Professional Social Networking

STDPreventionOnline.org (<http://www.stdpreventiononline.org/>)

Video

Take Care Down There (<http://www.takecaredownthere.org/>)

Midwest Teen Sex Show (<http://midwestteensexshow.com/>)

Kicesie's Sex Ed (<http://www.youtube.com/kicesie>, <http://www.kicesiescloset.com/Welcome.html>)

Safe in the City (<http://safeinthecity.org/>)

The National Campaign on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/nationalcampaign>)

SexReally on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/sexreally>)

Video Games

Pos or Not (<http://www.posornot.com/>)

HopeLab's Re-Mission (<http://www.hopelab.org/innovative-solutions/re-mission>)

Games for Health (<http://www.gamesforhealth.org/>)

Games for Change (<http://www.gamesforchange.org/>)

Stay Teen (www.stayteen.org)

Text Messaging (SMS)

Sex and Tech (<http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/sextech/>)

Sex Info SF (<http://www.sextextsf.org/>)

RealTalkDC (<http://www.realtalkdc.org/>)

ACAP Text Messaging Line (<http://www.alexgetreal.com/>)

Talking Sex Together (<http://www.teenstxt.com/>)

Know It (<http://www.hivtest.org/>)

AIDS Personal PSAs (http://www.mynmi.net/aids_ppsa/)

Texting4Health (<http://www.texting4health.org/>)

Text4Baby (<http://text4baby.org/>)

BrdsNBz Text Message Warm Line (<http://appcnc.org/brdsnbz-text-message-warm-line>)

Sext Line (<http://www.nptlabs.com/products/sext/about>)

Bedsider (www.bedsider.org)

Talking Sex Together (<http://www.teenstxt.com/>)

User-Generated Content

Fresh Focus Video Contest (<http://www.dogooder.tv/freshfocusvideocontest/>)

In Brief (<http://undiescontest.com/>)

ThinkHIV (<http://www.thinkhiv.org/dp/>)

Stand By What You Say (<http://www.standbywhatyousay.com/>)

YouTube (<http://youtube.com/>)

Examples of Integration

Trojan Evolve (<http://www.trojancondoms.com/>)

StayTeen (<http://stayteen.org/>)

SexReally (<http://sexreally.com/>)

Additional Resources

Common Craft (Videos that explain technology “in plain English”) (<http://www.commoncraft.com/>)

ISIS (Internet Sexuality Information Services) (<http://www.isis-inc.org/>)

DIOSA Communications (<http://diosacomunications.com/>)

NTEN (Nonprofit Technology Network) (<http://nten.org/>)

The National Campaign (<http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/>)

Managing the Media Monster (<http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/monster/>)

Public Health Digital Brief (http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/DigitalBrief_PublicHealth_July2008.pdf)

Practice Matters: Using New Media to Promote Adolescent Sexual Health: Examples from the Field
(http://www.actforyouth.net/documents/NewMedia_Oct09pdf.pdf)

Teen Health Series Project from the Jane Fonda Center at Emory University
(<http://janefondacenter.emory.edu/projects/brushcomputerpres.cfm>)

Sex Etc. (<http://www.sexetc.org/>)

Go Ask Alice! (<http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/>)